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**ROMANIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BRÂNDUȘA PREDESCU  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA TO THE OPCW AT THE  
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express the appreciation of Romania for the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico, for his dedication and valuable work at the forefront of the Conference during the last year. Likewise, let me congratulate Ambassador Christoph Israng of Germany, on the appointment as the new Chairperson of the Conference. I wish to assure him of the entire support on behalf of Romania in fulfilling his mandate.

From the outset let me stress that Romania supports the statement of the European Union.

I would therefore like to briefly address the Conference of the OPCW States Parties in my national capacity.

First of all, let me commend the Director-General for his statement delivered to the Conference of the States Parties in the opening of the Conference in which he highlighted the progress achieved in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention over the past year, but also referred to the challenges that we are facing. I would also wish, on behalf of Romania, to acknowledge Ambassador Üzümcü's leadership and strong engagement to defend the credibility of the Convention and to work, together with his dedicated team in the Secretariat, in order to enable our Organisation to serve the purpose it was created for, namely the prohibition, anywhere and under any circumstances, of the use of chemical weapons.

However, we have been witnessing confirmed use of chemical weapons in a State Party to the Convention, placing that respective State Party in breach of the Convention. Against this troubling background, Romania welcomes the decision of the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council which condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. My delegation has also expressed its support in this regard for the "Statement by Concerned States Parties" initiated by the delegations of Australia, Canada and the Netherlands. Romania stands firm in expressing its conviction that any and every actor responsible for these attacks with chemical weapons should be held accountable.

The findings of the third and fourth reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism are extremely worrying. We commend the discussions held during the recent Executive Council because we believe it is essential not to close our eyes when confronted



with such unprecedented breaches of the Convention. The challenges that the international community has been confronted with over the past months must be tackled, and not put aside. This requires political will and determination.

In this context, we praise the cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW and we encourage the two organisations to continue their close work in the same spirit. Romania welcomes the one-year extension of the JIM's mandate by the United Nations Security Council on 17 November 2016 to continue its work in investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We also welcome the decision of Director-General, Ahmet Üzümcü, to support the continuation of the Fact-Finding Mission's work as long as it will be needed.

Romania appreciates the efforts by the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the Libyan Government and several States Parties that led to the safe removal of the remaining chemical weapon precursors from Libya for destruction outside the country. We appreciate this to represent a significant step in the process of bringing stability and security to Libya.

There should be no doubt whatsoever that the threat posed by chemical weapons is far from being eradicated. This is why the OPCW will continue to play an important role in the years to come and in the long term. In this respect, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Permanent Representatives of Canada and South Africa as Co-Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW. Preparing the transition from destroying chemical weapons to preventing their re-emergence is of utmost importance not only for the Organisation, but moreover for the future of our world.

Closely linked to these far reaching efforts is the activity of the open-ended Working Group on Terrorism and of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors. I seize this opportunity to commend the Chairpersons of these two OPCW critical platforms, Ambassador of Ghana and Ambassador of Chile, for their important work.

We also commend the work done by the delegations of Australia and Switzerland on the issue of aerosolisation of the central nervous system-acting chemicals, an initiative Romania is supporting.

It goes without saying that international cooperation is paramount to the capacity of OPCW to fulfil its mandate. Romania has and will continue to actively support the Organisation, not only politically, but also in kind, by its expertise. In this respect, the recent visit to Romania by representatives from the Technical Secretariat opened possibilities to identify and convene prospective new bilateral projects by which Romania could, in the near future, be among the States Parties that provide training facilities to OPCW experts.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate Romania's firm commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the OPCW.

I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.